

cost too much. These are veterans who served our country, who went to war for us to be in this Chamber, to be able to have free education, public education, to be able to have an incredible country. People are for veterans or people are against veterans. It is not a complicated issue. The bill that failed told me where some people were. Some were for veterans and some were against veterans. We had two wars unpaid for, trillions of dollars. Now it comes time to pay the bill for the people who have served our country, and we debate that we can't do that.

We are going to have a bill in short order on providing all kinds of tax extenders for horses in Kentucky to get special tax breaks, but we are not going to pay for that. We are not going to pay for that. But when it comes to veterans: Oh, we have to pay for that. Too bad. No. When that bill comes forward, it is time to see who is for veterans and who is against veterans. It is not complicated. In the tax bill there are special deductions for horse racing. We are not going to pay for it. Somehow, horses are important.

Veterans are important. This is an issue we take care of. Complaining about what it will cost—veterans have paid the ultimate price. They have served our country. And the people who are not coming back have served and paid the ultimate price.

My poor staff sometimes wonders where I am going with my presentation. I get pretty outraged about this, because in Alaska veterans are an important issue. This country is important. And for us to debate the few couple billion or a few hundred million that we are complaining about—some people have—we have spent \$2 trillion-plus on wars. It is time for us to pay the debt to these veterans.

I know we are going to have a hearing this week in the committee. We will be working on the bill that Senator SANDERS has put together and I have participated in, as has every other member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. It is time to do the right thing for our veterans.

I appreciate the opportunity to be on the floor. As an Alaskan I recognize the importance of our veterans. I believe everyone in this Chamber recognizes the importance of our veterans. But they will have a chance. They will have an opportunity to decide if they are for veterans or if they are against veterans. If they come down with convoluted Washington, DC, doublespeak about how they can't do the bill because of this or that—people are fed up in this country. I know when I go back home, they just ask me a very simple question: Can we get better health care for our veterans? Can we access the GI bill to make sure veterans get an opportunity to get a better education? Is there an opportunity for them to take the skill they learned in the military and put it to work to get a job? These are the things we should be fighting for.

I have a feeling we will be down here with some Members quibbling over some small detail because they really don't want to pass the bill. Again, they are for veterans or they are against veterans. It is not complicated.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 796, the Selig nomination, and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of that nomination; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we expect this nomination to be confirmed by voice vote, so we expect four rollcall votes at 11 a.m.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MARK G. MASTROIANNI TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

NOMINATION OF BRUCE HOWE HENDRICKS TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

NOMINATION OF TANYA S. CHUTKAN TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider

the following nominations which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nominations of Mark G. Mastroianni, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts; Bruce Howe Hendricks, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina; and Tanya S. Chutkan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be now 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on confirmation of the Mastroianni nomination.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote on the confirmation of three nominees to serve on the U.S. district courts in Massachusetts, South Carolina, and the District of Columbia. The Senate Judiciary Committee reported two of these nominees unanimously to the full Senate, and the third nominee with strong bipartisan support.

These nominees are not controversial and in past years would have been confirmed weeks, or even months, ago. Instead, Republicans continue to refuse to give consent for votes on any judicial nominee, irrespective of their qualifications or the support of home State Senators. As a result, yesterday the Senate was forced again to waste valuable time voting to end the unnecessary filibusters of three highly qualified nominees. The Senate has now voted to end the filibusters of 44 judicial nominees so far during 2014. It is every Senator's right to demand continued debate on any measure or nomination before this chamber. But I would say to any Senator who requires a cloture vote on a qualified, consensus nominee to at least speak about the nominee and not to obstruct for obstruction's sake.

I hope that this partisan fever will break in the near future, and that Republicans will stop reducing the Senate's constitutional role of advice and consent into a tool of obstruction. These delays should stop.

Mark Mastroianni has been nominated to fill a judicial vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. He has served since 2011 as district attorney in the Hampden district attorney's office and previously worked in private practice. Following law school, he served as an assistant district attorney in the Hampden District Attorney's Office from 1990 to 1995. Mr. Mastroianni has the support of his home State senators, Senator WARREN and Senator MARKEY. The Judiciary Committee reported him favorably to the full Senate by voice vote on March 6, 2014.

Judge Bruce Hendricks has been nominated to fill a judicial vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina. She has served since 2002 as a U.S. magistrate judge for the